

From the Stacks
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When I was a kid, Moma treated Easter like it was a national holiday, and she was the commander in charge. Missing Easter service was not an option. Actually, missing any Sunday service was not an option. If you woke up breathing, you were going to church. End of discussion.

The Easter outfit was practically a production. Moma would hunt down the perfect dresses for us girls and a coordinating suit for my brother, while Daddy somehow skated by with just a new tie. Our first stop was always James Kahn. Moma would examine socks like a jeweler inspecting diamonds and tell Miss Doris, "I need lace socks with just a hint of pink." And somehow, Miss Doris would produce exactly that. Meanwhile, Mr. Sol would appear with hats and gloves like a magician pulling rabbits out of a hat, seasonally appropriate, of course.

Then came the shoes. White patent leather or black patent leather? One year, I dared to dream bigger: red patent leather T-straps from Don Perkey Shoes in Paragould. Moma said, "If you get those, everybody's outfit will have to change." I got the shoes. Easter turned into a navy-and-red photo shoot. No regrets.

Moma did not stop at outfits. She had crafts. She would take a sewing needle and carefully poke holes in both ends of eggs, then blow out the insides like some sort of Easter wizard. After washing and drying them, she'd dye the shells and hang them from a little tree in the yard using pipe cleaners. We had an egg tree!

Moma would stash away goodies: chocolate bunnies, favorite candies, Lip Smackers for us girls, and Pepsi for my brother (because nothing says "Easter joy" like caffeine). One year, we got baby chicks, tiny, fluffy, adorable yellow chicks...until the day I came home and discovered they had mysteriously turned green, blue, and one very questionable combination of yellow with an orange-and-pink tail.

Moma and my brother stood back like innocent bystanders while I processed this miracle of nature. When I told Daddy, he looked at those technicolor birds and said, "Are you sure?" After a closer inspection, he added, "I think somebody's pulling your leg." Meanwhile, Moma and my brother were trying to hold in the laughs. Easter wasn't just about resurrection. It was also about pranks.

After church, Moma would serve a full feast: glazed ham, potato salad, Heavenly Hash, rolls, and carrot cake enough food to feed a small army or one very committed family. The egg hunt followed, complete with prizes and, occasionally, egg throwing that felt

less “wholesome tradition” and more “mild chaos.” Weeks later, we’d find the forgotten eggs and more chaos might erupt.

As a mom, I tried to carry on Moma’s magic though maybe with slightly fewer airborne eggs. From the patchwork dress bought at Cracker Barrel to the white dresses with blue embroidered flowers, one little girl with big brown eyes and the little one with gold-flecked blue eyes looking so adorable as they ran to the back yard to find eggs, dirt, or the cat. Two boys with perfectly combed hair in khaki shorts and pastel shirts rolling in the grass before they throw plastic eggs out of the car.

Easter is a gentle and a slightly sugarcoated reminder that even after life’s darkest, messiest seasons, things can turn around. Easter is about resurrection, hope, and new life. Like spring popping up when we least expect it, Easter shows us that growth can come after the rough patches and that brighter days tend to show up right when we’ve almost given up...usually with a chocolate bunny in hand just to sweeten the deal. Happy Easter!